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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: Thailand: Coordination and Outreach on Maritime Security

REF: SECSTATE 38877

-- (U) THE FOLLOWING IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED, PLEASE PROTECT ACCORDINGLY, NOT FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION --

1. (U) In response to reftel, various agencies at Post have portfolio responsibility and/or interest in maritime security. The Economic section has portfolio responsibility for maritime security from an economic policy standpoint. The Political section has responsibility for engaging and coordinating with the Royal Thai Government (RTG) on a broad range of non-proliferation policy initiatives related to Maritime Security. These issues include the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) which has a large maritime component focused on ship boarding to stop WMD proliferation; the Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI) which focuses on maritime security in south-east Asia, particularly in the Straights of Malacca; and the Export and Border Security Program (EXBS) which includes programs to develop export control standards, technology and the legal framework to stop exports of WMD related materials. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) also has responsibility, coordinating with TSA, and liaising with Team Thailand, an RTG coordination mechanism comprising 12 stakeholders, including the Maritime Department Port Authority, Thai Customs, Thai National Security Council, Royal Thai Navy, Thai Police, local government, and the private sector. DAO has an interest in Thailand's port security for ship visits, and the Joint US Military Advisory Group Thailand (JUSMAGTHAI) is charged by DOD with oversight of force protection issues for DOD personnel in or transiting Thailand, in coordination with the Force Protection Detachment, a DOD entity located within RSO. Other agencies which have interest are FCS, from a commercial facilitation and trade advocacy standpoint, USTDA, which has funded projects related to maritime security and US technology, and FAS, as port security relates to FDA matters and its responsibilities under the 2002 Bioterrorism Act. While the broad issue of having Thailand support Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI) goals is referenced in the MPP, maritime security coordination is not specifically addressed.

2. (SBU) Although there is no dedicated maritime security coordination mechanism at Post, with agencies holding coordination meetings on an ad hoc basis, agencies agree that coordination within the Embassy, and with the RTG and private sector, has been excellent. However, these agencies also agree that coordination with USG agencies based in Washington is sometimes problematic. Washington agencies have been known to send port assessment teams one after another, sometimes with little coordination with post, to do identical assessments. After multiple USG assessments within a short period, RTG contacts have complained about the added burden these assessments present, contending this would be easily remedied by better USG coordination and sharing of information. Post agencies believe this has caused undue strain on their relations with RTG contacts in the past, and can be easily avoided by Washington agencies' better coordination amongst themselves, and with agencies at Post.

BOYCE